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# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

VOL. XII

DECEMBER, 1911

NO. 3

## EDITORIAL COMMENT



### NURSES IN UNIFORM IN PUBLIC PLACES

THE Red Cross has issued a letter to its committees, encouraging its 2500 enrolled nurses to take part in the sale of the Red Cross Christmas seal, but requesting that in doing so, they shall not appear in uniform, and reminding them that it is against the rules of the Red Cross for them to wear the brassard.

For some reason which we cannot quite understand, the lay people who are promoting the sale of the Red Cross seals fail to appreciate the fact that in this country it is a great breach of nursing etiquette for nurses to wear the garb, which is intended only for the sick room, as a means of advertising or of attracting the attention of passers-by. We are quite sure that the enrolled nurses, who represent the very highest type of women in the nursing profession, who have been selected by carefully appointed local committees, and who have been enrolled only after thorough consideration by the national committee, will not disregard the request issued by the Red Cross. What applies to Red Cross nurses should apply to every reputable graduate nurse over the length and breadth of the land. Red Cross nurses will, of course, wear the official pin, and other nurses the pin or badge of their alumnae association or school, but they should not make themselves conspicuous by appearing in uniform. In this movement of selling Red Cross seals, their place in the work is on exactly the same basis as that of ladies from other walks of life, and they should refuse to be set apart and made a spectacle of because they belong to the nursing profession.

The guarding of the dignity of the nurse's uniform is one of the first duties of nurses who are members through affiliation, or otherwise, of the American Nurses' Association, and except when engaged

in the discharge of official duties, such as visiting nursing in some form, no reputable nurse should ever be seen on the street in it.

We have lately had our attention called to the case of a young woman, in full nurse's costume, arrested for soliciting for immoral purposes. When questioned by the judge, she stated that she was not a nurse, but had been given the uniform by the woman who sent her out. We know that the use of the uniform by fallen women and house-breakers is of common occurrence in England. Let it not be possible for it to become so here. If nurses will cease to appear in public in uniform, and if only degraded women wear it on the street, it will cease to have any value even for them.

#### A ROBB MEMORIAL CALENDAR

THE Robb Educational Fund has, in a little more than a year, reached the remarkable proportions of nearly \$7500. Only \$2500 more will be necessary before the income of at least \$400 will be available for a scholarship. For no one of the projects put forward by the American Nurses' Association has the response been so prompt, so liberal, and so far-reaching, pupils in training, individually and in classes, being among those who are showing respect to a woman who was among those foremost in educational leadership.

These scholarships will not be confined to any one educational centre or to any one section of the country, but are to be used for the broadening of the nurse's education wherever opportunity for special work is to be found. Consequently it will be seen that its benefits will be enduring, and for nurses of the future as well as those of the present. Its development is to cover a long period of years, for while we can begin to use its income soon, it is intended that nurses of many generations shall contribute to it.

Just at this Christmas season, when nurses are seeking suitable gifts for their friends, the committee in charge of this fund has issued a calendar, a description of which is found on one of the first pages of *Nursing News*, the income from which will be used to swell this fund. No more suitable gift could a nurse select for friends at a distance, for fellow nurses, former patients, members of boards of managers, and members of the medical profession than this calendar, which gives in quotations the thoughts of a nurse whose utterances are so valued by her fellow workers. A liberal distribution of the calendar will serve as a means of enlightening a great many people as to the aims and standards we are working for, and will serve the double purpose of educating those whom we wish to have appreciate our ideals, and of

helping forward this fund for the better preparation of future nurse teachers and specialists requiring preparation for lines of work not yet developed.

#### CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

THOSE associations that have made their annual donation to the Robb Educational Fund will now naturally turn their interests to the Nurses' Relief Fund, the initial steps for which were taken at the Boston meeting. Although this is the youngest of the great projects of the American Nurses' Association, it is one that has long been considered, and the need of which is greatly felt in certain directions.

Charity begins at home. Nurses are giving of their strength and vitality in the discharge of their every-day duties, and in the work of all the great social reforms, and have contributed liberally to all our great educational projects. As a class they have been indifferent to their own future, presumably because of their greater concern for education, and, further, perhaps, because until recent years there have been comparatively few enfeebled by age or incapacitated by illness. Like all other older groups of workers who are organized, we have come to see the need of such a fund to be controlled by the American Nurses' Association, to be used in whatever way may be deemed wisest and best, for the benefit of our members, regardless of state or organization, to supplement many times the help of the *alumnæ* association, or to meet the demand which comes from a sudden emergency.

Perhaps because this fund is for our own benefit, so to speak, the enthusiasm has not been as yet all we could wish it were. Having put off provision for our future until everything else has been looked after, let us now go at it with vim, and increase this amount materially each year so that everyone may feel she has contributed to a fund which may help her in case of an unforeseen catastrophe.

#### PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

*Pennsylvania.*—In the State of Pennsylvania a test case has been made of the "Philadelphia School for Nurses," a school of the ten-weeks type, one of whose graduates was refused registration by the board of examiners on the ground that the school from which she was graduated did not meet the educational requirements of the law. The court refused to sustain the nurse's claim on the ground that the board of examiners does not come within its jurisdiction. Although this would seem to be a technicality for the evasion of the real issue, it really sustains the board of examiners in its action. It remains to be seen whether the case will be taken to a higher court.

In a report to the board of examiners at its second annual meeting, Dr. Higbee called attention to many interesting things in the work of the board, two of which are of special interest. The first is that an action in the county courts was originated by the board to prevent the "Physicians' National Board of Regents" from issuing certificates which it considers equivalent to granting an R. N. This action is still before the court, but since the action has been taken, the issuing of these certificates has ceased and the Board of Regents has practically gone out of existence. Second, he emphasizes the need for promoting reciprocity between states having passed laws, and suggests that a communication be sent to each examining board in the country asking them to send representatives to the next meeting of the Society of Superintendents of Training Schools, where they could discuss the subjects and combine for their own good.

*Massachusetts.*—After a prolonged struggle of six years before securing state registration, during which time Massachusetts nurses were exceptionally active and enthusiastic, that reactionary condition which is so apt to follow unusual exertion, and a seeming inertia, seem to have taken possession of the members. A leaflet which has been issued by one of the committees to rouse the members to a sense of their responsibility in the administration of the law is applicable to all the states, as this condition has followed the securing of registration everywhere, but in those states where the law has been longest in operation reaction has followed in the form of greater activity along educational lines, and doubtless this will be the result in Massachusetts.

#### THE CLOSING YEAR

THE year 1911 while not marked by unusual events has been one of steady progress along all the lines of effort that tend for the great uplift of nursing.

It has been one of unusual prosperity to this JOURNAL, and as the time approaches for the taking over of the full responsibility of its management by the American Nurses' Association, it is a matter of congratulation to those who are doing the work, as well as to the Association, that, as regards its broad educational influence, its financial condition, and in the number of subscriptions, it has never been so prosperous. During the year so many expressions of appreciation have come to us that we feel we cannot bid good-by to 1911 without telling these unknown friends how much encouragement their friendly words bring us.

In spite of this prosperity and harmony, we know there is a large

number of members of organizations, whose property the JOURNAL practically is, who not only do not subscribe for it and do not read it, but who are actually ignorant of its contents and management. We find indications of this in attending meetings and in letters which constantly arrive at this office, in which we are addressed as "Dear Sir," showing that the writers do not realize that the magazine is in the hands of nurses. Such letters contain questions which give conclusive evidence that the writers are ignorant of nursing affairs and progress as no reader of the JOURNAL could possibly be.

We want to remind those who are interested in their JOURNAL's prosperity that we are making an effort to double the subscription list this year in celebration of its taking over by the American Nurses' Association, and as a tribute to the pioneers who financed the JOURNAL in the beginning for the Association, and who carried its burdens, so many of them without compensation, during the experimental period. Those who cannot take part with the organizations to this end can contribute their mite by each securing one new subscriber.

We want to suggest to the presidents of all organizations affiliated with the American Nurses' Association over the length and breadth of this country that at every meeting held during the coming year a special effort shall be made to bring the JOURNAL before the members. This is especially necessary at state meetings, where nurses who are not members of local organizations are present. To show how easily nurses respond where special effort is made—at the meetings in Indiana and Missouri which we recently attended, paper and pencil were passed through the audience for the names of those who wished to take advantage of the club rates of \$1.50 each for a club of twenty or more, and at each meeting 39 new names were secured in this way. But it required the personal interest, energy, and solicitation of one member to take the responsibility of carrying it through, of taking the addresses, and sending the money to Philadelphia. Sample copies and subscription blanks should be on a table near the entrance at every meeting and can be had for the asking free of charge.

#### OUR BOOK DEPARTMENT

THE book department was established in the beginning for the convenience, especially, of isolated workers who had not access to good stores, and who could save themselves time and trouble by sending an order and the money for it at the same time to us, letting the trouble of ordering from different publishers be ours. We find that this department is being so generally used that it materially adds to our in-

come by the commission which is obtained and in this way the amount the JOURNAL can contribute to the educational and relief funds will be increased. We ask the superintendents of training schools, especially, to so far as possible place their orders for text-books and for books of all kinds with us, whether listed in the JOURNAL or not. It is our business to look up these books or to put the writer in touch with publishers, if such seems to be for their greater interest. Letters of inquiry about books and for prices are gladly answered. The lists published in the JOURNAL are not in any sense intended to be exhaustive, they are simply the standard books, especially those written by nurses, and it is our intention to add to these lists occasionally.

Because of the fact that all the state boards include genito-urinary questions in their examinations, where male nurses are registered, there has come to us a number of requests to recommend such a text-book for use in training schools. We are making inquiries along these lines, but so far can only recommend one in the Medical Epitomes series. There are larger medical treatises, costing from three to six dollars apiece, but while waiting the better development of salvarsan treatment, it might not be well to purchase expensive volumes. There is need for a text-book on this subject written especially for nurses.

Requests continue to come for the recommendation of books on sex hygiene, and there is such a difference of opinion in regard to the value of those published that we are relying on the list recommended by *The Survey* which we published last month.

We want again to call the attention of nurses who are studying this subject to the quarterly magazine issued by the Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis, 29 West 42d Street, New York, called *Social Diseases*. The October number contains a report of the joint meeting, held on October 12 by this society and the New York Association of Biology Teachers, on the general subject, "The Teaching of Sex in Schools and Colleges." It is full of valuable suggestions to those who are preparing to teach this subject. As the subscription to this quarterly for the year is \$1, it may be that a single number can be obtained for twenty-five cents, but we have no direct information as to this.

#### OUR EDITORIAL PAGES

ONE of our friends, who finds writing papers on any occasion a very great task, asked us recently how we knew what subjects to write about twelve times a year. In the early days of the JOURNAL we confess to having felt some anxiety from month to month for fear we might run short of subjects and material, but never once has there been a scarcity

of either. We do not select the subjects for editorials in any haphazard manner, they are forced upon us by compulsion from the outside, and we rarely take the space to comment on all the topics that have been brought forward for any one issue, because of the crowding of other material. From the problems pressing upon our notice we endeavor to choose those that are most vital to the majority of our readers.

We should like this month to comment at length on the two splendid educational papers we are publishing in this issue—Miss Riddle's address as president of the Superintendent's Society, which was very late in reaching us, and which is written from the stand-point of a practical superintendent of large experience, and Dr. Downing's discussion of the New York Nurse Practice Act, coming from an educator of prominence, experienced in the administration of the laws for the registration of law, pharmacy, and medicine. But the two papers speak for themselves, and we only hope every nurse will take time to go over them carefully.

We are holding over for another number such subjects as standards of boards of examiners and the field for the small hospital, two of the most burning problems in the whole country, and it is our intention in January to review at length the progress that is being made in the establishment of central registries by and for registered nurses.

We cannot close these pages without an expression of appreciation of the splendid enthusiasm which we found in our recent trip to the southwest among groups of women almost unknown to us, personally, who were following the same ideals, working for the same standards, putting forth if anything greater efforts than in the states where nursing has been longer established. All of this promises a continuation of the work already begun, and it gave us courage to find the JOURNAL a familiar hand-book among these workers.

#### CHRISTMAS

AGAIN we pause for a while, to celebrate that day on which was born to this planet of ours, the great underlying laws of life and love in the person of Christ our Elder Brother.

He came to teach us the great truths and slowly, surely as the Christmas days slip past, are we learning them.

May something of His joy in giving and receiving be yours this Yuletide Season, and may the peace and beauty of the Eternal strike deep into your heart and life.